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WHERE ARE THE TEN TRIBES ?

IV.

[Concluded from page 201.]

DAVID REUBENI,¹ son of the King Solomon, and younger brother of Joseph, who is king in the desert Habor of thirty myriads of the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half of Menasseh, travels as his brother's ambassador to Rome. From the desert Habor he goes to Jedda, and thence to Suakin, in the land of Cush. We have already noticed the importance of Suakin² for those who travelled from Abyssinia to Egypt. We abstain from giving details about David's journey to Rome, which has little that bears upon our subject.³ As for his account of the Tribes, we had better give it in the words of the Jewish geographer, Abraham Ferussol,⁴ who personally knew David, the pretended Reubenite, but, in fact, a German Jew, and from whom he received information concerning the Ten Tribes—information not to be found in David's diary.

We give the translation of the fourteenth chapter of Ferussol's book, which runs as follows:—

“Concerning the Jew of the Ten Tribes, his business and his travels, who is said to come from the desert of Habor, he is the same who was in the deserts of Asia and Yemen. He

¹ The original MS. of David's Diary is lost at present; but happily a *facsimile* of it, made by Mr. J. J. Cohen, takes the place of the original amongst the Hebrew MSS. of the Bodleian Library. The Library of the Breslau Seminary possesses a copy of it (made by J. J. Cohen in German cursive characters).

² See above, p. 196.

³ See Dr. Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, Bd. ix. (2nd edition), p. 244, *sqq.*

⁴ פֶּרִיצוֹל, usually transliterated Faritzol, and by Thomas Hyde, in his edition of the author's *Itinera Mundi* (in Hebrew with a Latin translation, Oxford, 1691), Peritzol. Ferussol is to be found in Latin documents (see *Revue des Études Juives*, VII. (1883), p. 237). An excellent monograph on Abraham Ferussol has been written by the former Librarian of Parma, Cav. P. Perreau.

reached Egypt in the year 5283 (1523), and thence he went to Rome.

"For the benefit of this book, which I, Abraham Ferussol, have composed to reveal the 'paths of the world' to those who do not know them, I choose to write this chapter, the object of which is to give the travels of the Jew of the Ten Tribes, or, perhaps, of Judah, named David, the son of Solomon, prince of the host of Israel, whom we have seen in Italy, on his way, according to his own words, from the desert of Habor. Those who will read it will find rest to their soul, for I shall not fail to give in my following narrative all I have heard from the mouths of esteemed persons and from letters of men of truth.

"In the year 5283 (1523), we had news from Palestine by southern ships, to the effect that a Jew of the Ten Tribes brought tidings concerning them. He did not find it necessary to divulge them until he crossed the sea in the year 5284 (1524), reached Venice, and went to Rome, when he gave the following accounts. This Jew was a descendant of those two Tribes who dwell in the deserts, just as the Reubenites dwell, in tents, and his station was in the desert of Habor, in Asia Major. Further on are the other Tribes, near to the desert, on the way to Mekka and Djedda, on the Red Sea. They have kings, princes, and tribes, numerous as the sand on the sea-shore. Their products are spices, pepper, articles of medicine, and other good things, which we shall mention later on. Between these two Tribes lies a powerful Ishmaelitic (Arabic) kingdom which does them damage, and prevents their approaching one another. When Christian ships, provided with arms and cannon, came many years before into this part of the world, the Jews of Habor sent this Jew, according to his own words, to the great King of all the Christians (the Pope), with credentials, confirmed by the King of Portugal, who reigns over India, and who knew the existence of a Jewish kingdom there. Be this as it may be, true or not, and whatever this Jew may be, in our country kings, princes, and the people believe that the Tribes are still in existence, that they are numerous, and that they have many kings."

In the fifteenth chapter, Ferussol, in speaking of Calcutta as the place where spices are brought in from more than 1,500 islands, says that in them are found many Jews. Of course, he does not say that they are descendants of the Ten Tribes.

In the twenty-fourth chapter, speaking of the Indian Ocean, he says, "After passing the great gulf towards Ethiopia, one reaches the continent of Mekka, which is near the Indian Sea. In the upper part of this country are great deserts, and settle-

ments of Jews, who are on the river Ganges, which is the Biblical Gozan, as I have already written, and as it is also explained by the Christians. And so it is written in recent books, that, in the regions above the country of Mekka, and also those above the deserts of Calicut, there are to be found numerous Jews and many kingdoms, but they are far one from the other—viz., the Jews above Mekka and those above Calicut; and in the islands of the Indian Ocean their number is endless, and they are everywhere rich in gold and spices. And if the Christian writers say that the Jews are oppressed and despised by the black inhabitants and by the Ishmaelites, these reports are only a proof that there are Jews in these regions, and that they are rich. And so says the great Christian writer [Vespucio] in his book on the New World, printed some time ago at Venice. Thus he says, in Part II., 60th chapter, which begins with the words, ‘Circa le cose della India,’ that the existence of many Jews, with their kings and their wealth in spice and pepper, is a certainty.” The Ganges (according to Ferussol, the Gozan or the Sambatyon), has its source above Calicut, and divides the Indians from the Jews. About the real existence of the Sambatyon he refers to the Talmud and Josephus, and his controversial book, called “The Shield of Abraham.” Moreover, Ferussol says “that the Christian writer mentioned above stated that he found many Jewish merchants at Calicut, descendants of the Tribes settled above Calicut, between the mountains of Gozan and its rivers, and there is the Sambatyon, which separates the Jews from the Indians, whilst on the continent of the country of Mekka lies, on the nearest side to us, the desert of Habor. But between the two families of Jews—viz., those who dwell between the mountains of Gozan and its rivers, and those who are at Habor, beneath Yemen—there dwell Ishmaelite tribes, who harm them, and prevent them from joining together, as I have already said. Therefore it is possible, as I heard at Rome, that the Jew from the Tribes came to Italy from Habor by way of Yemen, which lies above Mekka.” At the end of the twenty-eighth chapter, Ferussol says, in the Book on the New World, it is stated that the Prester John is found in the country above Calicut, distant from the sea. Ferussol says, further, that the black priests of the Prester John always say that Jews are numerous in the neighbourhood of the country of Prester John. Some learned men, who were twice during two years at Calcutta, spoke, in the presence of the Duke Ercole, at Ferrara, of the state of Calcutta, Mekka, and the Prester John, and also of the Jews, who are numerous there, of their king, and their pursuits.

Nearly all these strange fictions came out of the brains of Italian Jews; amongst the most eloquent is Abraham Yagel (who lived in the sixteenth century). We shall give a free translation of the twenty-second chapter of his work, *Beth Yaar hal-Lebanon*, MS. in Oxford.¹

After giving the passages of the Talmudic literature, the fourth book of Esdras (of which he gives a Hebrew translation) and Josephus, he adds the following words, taken from a work containing additions to Ptolemy's Tables:—"New Africa," the author says, "is a part of the earth which was unknown to the ancient geographers, they not having found out the source of the Nile, which begins in the mountains, called by ancient writers the Mountains of the Moon, and now the Mountains of בִּי"ר. In these mountains dwell an immense number of Jews, who pay tribute to the King of Ethiopia, called Prete Joano. We therefore," says Yagel, "do not hesitate a moment to take these Jews to be descendants of the Ten Tribes, inasmuch as this northern corner was counted part of the territory of the Assyrian kings." Here follows a passage which cannot be correctly read, many words and lines having been crossed out by the author, or a censor. The inference is, that a great physician, Moses Todros, said something in the year 5343 (1583) concerning the men of the tribe of Asher. Yagel refers them to the accounts of David the Reubenite² and prior to him of Eldad.³ The rest of the illegible text seems to refer to some unhappy events in Germany during the Crusades in connection with a sorcerer. Yagel then continues thus:—"Moreover, in Maimonides' letters,⁴ which are not yet printed, it is stated as follows: 'As to your question concerning the Ten Tribes, know ye, that their existence is quite certain, and we expect daily their arrival from the dark mountains, the river of Gozan, and the river Sambatyon, places where now they are hidden away. This river flows all the week-days, and rests on the Sabbath. Indeed, in the time of my learned and pious grandfather, a bottle was brought filled with the sand of this river, which sand was in movement the six days, and rested on the Sabbath. This is a true fact, for more persons have seen it with their own eyes. Further, children of the Rechabites came at that time, of whom my father (blessed be his memory) told me that they still observe the precepts of their ancestors; that they are numerous as the sand of the sea ;

¹ *Sammelband*, IV., p. 37, *sqq.*

² See above, p. 403.

³ See above, p. 98.

⁴ See above, p. 195.

that they expect the help of God; and that they know the judgments, statutes, and mysteries of the Law.'” Yagel says, therefore, “that it is clear to anyone who has his right senses, that the Tribes still exist, and that they will return at the time when the Redeemer shall come to Sion. They are to be found amongst the three bands of exiles, of which one is inside the river Sambatyon (and they were, perhaps, the first exiles); they dwell in safety, have no other prince and superior but *Jhw*, their God, who reigns over them; they choose their princes from amongst themselves, and are those whom the Christian (whom I saw, and whose words I give in another place) found in great prosperity. They are surrounded on four sides; viz., towards the north by the Sambatyon and the Sand-sea, which stretches from east to west; on the west side they are closed in by the ocean (Mediterranean); towards the east and the south are high mountains, impassable from their great height, called the Mountains of the Sun and Moon, which Alexander the Great tried to pass. And of these exiles it is said, ‘To them that *are* in darkness show yourselves’ (Isaiah xlix. 9), for they are behind the dark mountains and the river Gozan; indeed Nahmanides says the Gozan is the Sambatyon. The second part of them includes those who dwell on the other side of the river Sambatyon, viz., the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half of Manasseh, who were the second exiles. They are far from Babylonia, in the towns of Media, and are also scattered in Africa; some are eighty days distant from Babylonia, and from thence came David, the Reubenite. In order to reach them one has to cross seas, rivers, and deserts; they have princes of their own nation, but pay tribute to the King of Ethiopia. They are constantly at war with their enemies in self-defence. Their rite is the same as ours, and only lately the great work of Maimonides reached them, which they accepted as their religious guide.¹ But they knew also the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud. Their territory reaches as far as Aden, to the land of Cush, and to the source of the Nile, where this river separates from the Euphrates (*sic*); they inhabit the strip between these two rivers. They are governed by a secretary of the King Daniel, and are very numerous, like the stars in heaven. With them are the children of Rehabiah and those of Moses, who number more than sixty myriads. Messengers were sent to them in the time of Pope Clement VII., a part of whom died on their way, and those remaining brought tidings concerning the

¹ This the Jews of Yemen have done.

greatness of the Tribes and their wide territories, having on the one side the King of Ethiopia and on the other the King of Persia. And the same says Benjamin.”¹ The third part Yagel puts in Arasata, in the boundaries of Riblah, according to Esdras IV.,² “whose dwelling remains now unknown, where they will remain until God remembers them. To sum up, Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh are on our side of the Sambatyon; the Rechabites, the children of Moses, Zebulon, Dan, Nephtali, Gad and Asher are on the other side of the Sambatyon; Ephraim, the other half of Manasseh, Simeon, and Issachar are in Daphne of Ribla; Judah, Benjamin, and most of the tribe of Levi are dispersed in Asia and Europe, as said by Josephus.”³

“And there is no doubt that in each exile of the four, there were many of other Tribes who went with the exiles according as they were more or less neighbours, so that each band of exiles was, indeed, mixed, comprising some of all the Twelve Tribes, in addition to men of other nations who joined themselves to the exiles. Israel, of course, increased in numbers, and was scattered to the four winds of heaven in order to proclaim to the nations the name of our one God. This is in my opinion the reason of the many exiles and wanderings of our fathers and ourselves, viz., that the name of the one God and his power should be made known by us from sunrise to sunset, until there shall be (on earth) Jehovah one, and his name one, and all shall know and recognise that to him alone belongs greatness and might, and to no one else.”

In a previous chapter Yagel makes the following statement:⁴ —“I heard at Lucera from a Christian named Vincenzo Milano, who was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks nearly twenty-five years, and travelled over mountains and through valleys with caravans, the following story: He once left Algiers with a pasha named Asan Basan Bey, of Barbarossa, who lived in the time of King Selim, having with him about 40,000 Turkish warriors, and in the camp were also twelve Jews, most of them of Algiers. They travelled on the road to Barbary, then towards Fez, and then to India. Here they found in a certain place inhabitants, short as a man’s arm, who fed upon grass, walked about naked, slept in caverns, and spoke an unintelligible language. The caravan left India to the left, passed all the land of the black king, and turned towards the west, until they reached the sand-sea. This is a desert

¹ See above, p. 189.

² See above, p. 190.

³ See above, p. 16.

⁴ *Sammelband*, IV., p. 42.

full of sand, which is blown from place to place according to the wind, just as the waves on the great sea. And because it forms waves, it is called sand-sea. Going further west they came to a river, called Sambatyon, which, wonderful to say, is full of water all the week-days, so strong that it rolls along great stones and a quantity of sand, so that no ship dare venture upon it; but on Friday, towards sunset, the river rests, and becomes quite dry, so that a child can cross it. It is said that the river is in some places one and a-half, three, and four miles broad; it flows between north and south, having to the right the west and to the left the east, until it falls into the ocean; ships which venture on it lose their way; indeed, no ship is yet known to have returned safely from this river. When the pasha and a part of his troops (for the greater part remained on the other side) crossed the river one Sabbath day, they travelled about a day's journey, and found inhabited cities and fertile land, where nothing was wanting; water came from the mountains in abundance. The cities were inhabited by Jews, fine-looking men, with handsome women, all dressed with silk, purple and fine woollen long dresses, reaching down to the heels, as in Turkey. The girls as well as the women wear their hair loose on the shoulders, with the difference that the married women wore a thick veil, so that nothing of their face could be seen. Vincenzo had not praise enough for the beauty of these inhabitants and their wealth. They took their meals sitting on carpets spread on the ground, just as in Palestine. They said that they were freemen, not subject to any king; choosing their own prince from their own nation. He saw seven kings, in royal apparel, with golden crowns; their kingdoms were very extensive with many cities. One amongst them, however, was not dressed in kingly costume, but wore a black cloak, an old man with a distinguished face; the Ishmaelites call him the *Pappos*, and they learn from him their law, and all the kings bow before him, and honour him like an angel of the God of Hosts. The pasha and his escort with the twelve Jews from Algiers who travelled with him, said to the Jews of this country and their kings that he was sent by the great Sultan Selim, who wished them good, to ask them to pay him tribute, since God had given him all the countries under the sun. Should they refuse to pay tribute, he would take revenge upon their brethren in his dominions, destroying them and driving them out of his kingdom. The seven kings, together with the old man in black, asked time to consider the matter. After three months they sent this answer, that since they had been in their land they had never paid to any sultan or king a fixed

tribute, and they were not willing to begin it now. But for the sake of the dispersed of Judah who were under the power of the sultan, although they did not observe the Law of Moses and its precepts in the right way, as themselves, and therefore were only brothers by name, they were willing to give silver, gold, and precious stones as a present now, but the sultan must not ask tribute a second time; they would certainly not agree to it, but wage war against him with all their allies. Thus they sent presents to the sultan as they promised, and gave also to the pasha precious garments. To the Jews who were with the pasha they presented, in addition to garments, three Hebrew books bound stiff, as in Italy, embroidered with gold and pearls. Vincenzo heard that these books were more precious to the Jews of this land than all jewels. Thus the pasha with his escort and the Jews with him, who acted as interpreters, repassed the river in order to return to their own country. Vincenzo continued to say that after eighteen months' journey not a fourth part of the army returned, for three-quarters of them died on the journey through the sand-sea. For travelling there is possible only with a magnetic compass, just as in voyages by sea. And sometimes they were obliged to rest a day or two, or even a week, for fear of being buried under the sand, and becoming mummies. Indeed, many mummies were found in the desert, and more than one hundred and fifty were brought to Algiers."¹

Moses Edrei² gives a curious account of a traveller in 5390 (1630), who went from Alexandria to Salonica, where he heard of a caravan which had come there from Abyssinia to buy iron. He went to see the pasha of this caravan, who promised to take him with him and bring him to the land of the Sambatyon; so he did. The name of the Israelite king in the year 5391 (1631) was Eleazar, and the *Pristiani* are mentioned, with whom the Jews were at peace. The description of the Sambatyon is the same as given above.³ In the year 5388 (1628), Edrei continues, eight European Jews resolved to cross the Sambatyon; the geographical items in this diary may, perhaps turn out to be of interest. These documents are signed by Aaron hal-Levi. Then follows a wonderful story of R. Baruch, an emissary from Jerusalem who travelled about in

¹ The Pasha might have seen or heard of Jews in Daggoutoun. See M. Loeb's report on it according to the *Mordecai Aby Serour*, Paris, 1850.

² ס' מעשה נסים, Amsterdam, 1818, p. 5, *sqq.*, according to a book called דרך הישר, which we have not seen.

³ See p. 193.

the year 5406 (1646) for the purpose of collecting money for the Holy Land. When he came into the country of the Medes and Persians he was attacked by robbers, who took from him all that he possessed, and left him in a wilderness without food or drink for ten days. All at once he saw a mighty man about to kill him. Baruch begged his life in Hebrew, and it turned out that this man was of the tribe of Nephtali, whose name was Malkiel. He left Baruch and went to see all the Tribes, who gave him a letter which Baruch should deliver only in Jerusalem. This letter is from the children of Moses, who give an account of the Sambatyon and their land, and is signed by the king Ahitub, son of Azariah; the prince Yehozadak, son of Ozer; and the Elder, Uriel, son of Aliasaph. The authenticity of this letter is confirmed by several rabbis of Jerusalem, Ashkenazic as well as Sephardic (amongst them the great Kabbalist Jacob ben Zemah), the confirmation of which is dated 15th of Menahem (Ab), 5417 (1647). The famous Azulai saw it at Reggio, and it came into the possession of the well-known R. Solomon Dubno. It is said that it was a copy of the original, which was in possession of the famous Kabbalist R. Nathan Spiro, dated 5406 (1646). R. Nathan died at Reggio the first day of Iyyar 5426 (1666), and the document remained in the Archives of the congregation in that town, as mentioned by Azulai. Abraham Solomon Zalman, an emissary from Jerusalem, found it on the 26th of Ab, 5592 (1832,) copied it at Reggio and brought it to Jerusalem: the late Jacob Saphir found it in Zalman's diary and published it in his *Eben Saphir*,¹ a work which deserves to be made known in an English translation. Cautious as Saphir was, he did not pronounce openly against the authenticity of the letter of the *Bene Mosheh*, and the story of R. Baruch and Malkiel. But he hints that the Hebrew style of the letter is doubtful, as coming from men who, according to their story, should have been in exile before the destruction of the first Temple, as the character of the letters and the Hebrew could not be as old as that. Saphir says that Baruch's letter may be placed in the same class as Eldad's diary, and therefore he cannot do better than put it before the public. What our own opinion is concerning all the reports which we have given in the course of our essay, our readers will easily guess. But for completeness we shall give a short abstract of the letter of the children of Moses.

After the usual preamble, they say that they do not know

¹ אבן ספיר, I., p. 98; זכור דוד, by David Zakkuth (Livorno, 1837), III., p. 55b; Carmoly in ציון (1841).

for what sin they were exiled to this place. They lament the destruction of the Temple, and envy the tribes of Judah and Benjamin their good fortune in being able to pray at the Western wall of the Temple, where the *Shekhinah* still resides. They heard lately from an Ishmaelite of the Turkish dominion, who was sold to the tribes of Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher, in what a state of oppression their brethren were living, and how the Law of the God of Israel was abused and put to shame. They rejoice, therefore, that they are independent and powerful. The letter gives the account of the wealth of the Tribes, and the story about the Sambatyon, just as mentioned in Eldad's diary. This Baruch ben Samuel of Pinsk, was sent in the year 5591 (1831) by the great Kabbalist named Israel with a letter addressed in the name of the German congregation in Palestine, to the Children of Moses and the Ten Tribes. After mentioning Eldad (in fact their address is derived from Eldad; we wonder if this letter reached them, no postal union then existing), the letter alludes to a persecution in Germany,¹ some time in the fifth thousand A.M., when a sorcerer tried to destroy Israel. They sent there a certain R. Meir Hazan, who passed the the Sambatyon on a Sabbath day, the breaking of the Sabbath being allowed when life was in danger, and carried with him R. Dan, a pious man of the Ten Tribes, who delivered them from the hand of this wicked sorcerer. The letter next mentions the arrival of David, son of Solomon, in Italy and Rome, in the year 5283 (1523).² Finally, it is alleged that two years previously Palestinian emissaries went to Yemen, where they saw a Danite named Issachar, who told them about their wealth and strength, and afterwards this man disappeared. Encouraged by these circumstances, they sent to them R. Baruch, son of Samuel, from Upper Galilee. The letter gives then a small catalogue of books which the Jews possess, concluding with the writings of R. Elijah Wilna. Then follow accounts of persecutions which become intolerable; moreover, they are poor and much in debt. The Palestine congregation ask the King of the *Bene Israel* to help them, and prayers will be offered up for them in the Holy Land. We shall see that the lost Tribes now become the object of the Palestinian emissaries to their brethren in Europe and elsewhere, inducing them to give money for the purpose of searching after the lost brethren. The same is the case in our own country, much money which could better be employed at home, being uselessly spent on this object. We do not mean to say that all the Rabbis who signed the

¹ See above, p. 411.

² See above, p. 408.

letters were impostors; far from it. They were imposed on by a few individuals, and could not refrain from helping an object which commended itself to them on really religious grounds. Of this R. Baruch, it is reported that he returned to Sana in Yemen, where he cured the young king and his household of a protracted illness. When he came back, the Rabbi of Sana went with him on his mission to find the Tribes. They took with them a servant named Joseph ben Zion Modai. They travelled fifteen days in the wilderness. On a Friday, R. Baruch got off his camel to perform the ceremony of the *Erub*,¹ and he was bitten by a scorpion, which he killed with a sword, cutting at the same time his own foot badly, and suffering enormous pain. He then saw a stray sheep, seized and slaughtered it, and cutting it in two, put his foot into the body, which cured him. R. Baruch was astonished to find a sheep in a wilderness. He, therefore, made search and found some shepherds, whom he asked in Arabic whence they came; they answered, "We are the shepherds of the flock of the Danites." He said to them, "Bring me to the Danites, for I am sent from the Holy Land." They replied, "We cannot do that before we ask permission; remain here with thy men several days until we return." So they went, and R. Baruch remained with his party in the desert, expecting the return of the shepherds. After waiting many days, the water they had with them grew less and less, and the Rabbi being afraid to stay longer, they returned to Sana. After his arrival here, R. Baruch completed the cure of the king, when the court physician, envying him his success, persuaded the king to kill him. His tomb is still shown at Sana. Some time after, a horseman of the Danites came to inquire after R. Baruch. When he heard that he was dead, he returned home and was never seen again. This story was told at Alexandria by the servant, Joseph Modai. The tragic end of R. Baruch is given in substance, but with more romantic details, by the late Jacob Saphir,² who heard it from the lips of Jews in Sana.

In the MS. of the British Museum,³ from which we have extracted the story of Baruch, there follows an account from another emissary sent from 'Tiberias, which is dated 3rd Ab, 5607 (1847), in which he says that when he went to have his passport read by the governor of Aden, he asked what his object was in travelling so far, and, on replying that it was to collect money for the Holy Land, the governor said, "Why not

¹ Called שביתה.² *Eben Sapir*, I., p. 95.³ *Sammelband*, IV., p. 26.

go to the newly discovered Jewish kingdom near me, of which I wrote to London? When you cross the sea at Aden there are thirty days to the great town of Arar, and ten days' journey from there is the Jewish kingdom, which musters 200,000 soldiers, and the inhabitants are very rich. The governor added that when he saw these Jews he believed in the advent of the Messiah and the return of the kingdom to Israel. He further told me that in China also there is a Jewish kingdom, and the Sambatyon is found there." What the Jewish kingdom in China is we have already seen.¹

But inquiry after the lost Tribes does not end with 1847. Jacob Saphir mentions that in the year 1854 a certain Amram Maarabi from Safed went in search of them. He travelled as an Arab to Mekka, inquired about the children of Rechab, but did not find them. He then went to Sana, travelled through the land in the footsteps of R. Baruch as far as Hayadan, but did not dare to continue his way through the great wilderness. Three years later, 1857, a certain David Ashkenazi from Jerusalem vowed that he would go in search of the lost Tribes, following the steps of R. Baruch and Amram. He grew his hair and beard long to look like a Dervish, but not knowing Arabic well, and still less the performances of Islamism, he was recognised, and everything was taken from him. David returned to the port לר"י, on the Red Sea, went to Massowah and from there to Suakin and Gondar, to make inquiries concerning the Jews in Abyssinia. His means being insufficient he returned empty-handed to Aden, where Jacob Saphir saw him in the year 1860.²

Saphir then states that he could not receive information about all these stories, but of this he is certain, that there are in Yemen, north-east towards Sana, about twenty-five days' journey on the road to Mekka, many Jews dwelling amongst the Arabs; they are kept in esteem, and there is no difference between them and the Arabs; other Jews are still nearer. I saw some of them, Saphir says, when they came to the market, which they do yearly, as reported to me. But the Sana Jews never inquired about their origin and their religious ritual. Why did not Saphir do so himself, since he had the opportunity? Saphir states that there is a family at Sana which styles itself the Danite family, saying that their ancestors were of the tribe of Dan. The founder of this family came, together with a man of the tribe of Asher, to Sana, wandering through a wilderness, and not being able to

¹ See above, p. 28.

² *Eben Saphir*, I., p. 96.

find their home and their tribe. The Asherite died here, and the Danite married and had children. The living members of this family call themselves Danites. Evidently the Danites are more frequently to be found than any of the other tribes.

Isaac ibn Akrish writes¹ (sixteenth century), that a pasha under Sultan Soleiman, who subjugated Yemen to the dominion of the sultan, said that in sailing towards India high mountains are visible, and behind them is a kingdom of the Jews. The physician Samuel Shullam heard the same from patients of high rank. A letter was received from Doshdomer, Governor of Abyssinia by the Governor of Egypt, in which the former asked reinforcement in troops and weapons, for he said, "If a Jewish prince had not helped me with 12,000 horsemen I should have been annihilated." And lately another Abyssinian Governor, who, on his way to Constantinople, passed through Egypt, said publicly that should any Jew wish to travel to the Jewish kingdom in his neighbourhood he would gladly bring him there under his protection. The Grand Vizir Sinan Pasha, under Sultan Murad, who reigns to-day over Roumania, Arabia, Asia, Europe, and a part of Africa, boasted, with his officials, that had not the treasury been emptied by the wars for the conquest of Yemen, we should have continued our conquest to the kingdom of the Jews, in which neighbourhood we were. This legend refers most likely to the rumour of the independent Falashas.

In another place Akrish² gives two reports on the kingdom of the Prester John and the Jews, the one by Moses Kohen Ashkenazi, of Crete, dated 16th of Adar, 5243 (1483), who heard it from an Arab, Ali by name, residing near the land of Hawilah; and the other from a letter sent from Jerusalem by a certain R. Elijah in the year 5129 (1349).

To sum up, excepting Benjamin of Tudela, and Abraham Yagel, the Jewish legends on the dwellings of the Ten Tribes turn on Yemen, Abyssinia and an unknown region in a desert between these two countries, which is still unexplored; there is consequently ground left for further legends. Only one places the Tribes in the West Indies; that is the opinion of Aaron Levi, formerly Antonio de Montezinos, and made known by Manasseh ben Israel's "Hope of Israel."³ A Hebrew inscription is mentioned from the Flanders Islands, which Manasseh tries to explain better than others had done. Of

¹ קול מבשר (מעשה בית דוד), p. 6. See Dr. Steinschneider's *Cat. Libr. Hebr. in Bibl. Bodleiana*, col. 1084.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 15 and 18b.

³ מוקה ישראל, Amsterdam, 1697, fol. 17b.

course, the Ten Tribes could not know the square characters, an objection unknown in the time of Manasseh, and, if known, one which could have had no influence upon the believers. But the West Indies were soon dropped out of consideration.

Thus we have finished with the legends of the lost Tribes as far as Jewish tradition is concerned. For completeness sake, however, we shall mention the opinions given by two recent Jewish diaries. First the diary of a Roumanian Jew, who modestly styled himself J. J. Benjamin the Second.¹ From personal knowledge we can affirm that this traveller spoke only one language, the Jewish-German (*jüdisch-deutsch*) dialect as used in his native country; of course he knew Hebrew as taught in the old schools. He had no notion of geography, history or modern science; what can we expect from the information of such a traveller, who could not talk with the natives, and could scarcely understand, except in writing, the Hebrew of the Eastern Jews, whose pronunciation was different from his own? Benjamin consequently could give no more than what the native Jews told him, and their traditions about the Nestorians, the Kurds, and the Afghans, are known and perfectly untrustworthy. Benjamin supposes that the Nestorians are descendants of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. Their keeping the Sabbath instead of the Sunday is no argument for their Jewish origin; they were converted by the Judæo-Christian apostles, who still kept the Sabbath and not the Sunday of the apostles of the Gentiles. About the Afghans, Benjamin refers to a paper printed at Wilna, in which it is said that the inhabitants of Afghanistan are descendants from the Ten Tribes. This theory had already been propounded by Sir John Malcolm in his history of Persia (I., p. 596). It is outside our purpose to give here his arguments, or to contradict them. As to the Nestorians, we may refer to Dr. Asahel Grant's monograph on "The Nestorians, or the Lost Tribes," which, based on sound researches, is a serious attempt to solve our question. The idiom of the Nestorians is Semitic, although rather Syriac than Aramaic, and the geographical situation of this people embraces part of the country where some of the lost Tribes would have been placed. The drawback is that no mention at all is made of them in the Babylonian Talmud, as is the case with the Jews of Mesena and Characena.²

¹ *Eight years in Asia and Africa, from 1846 to 1855*, translated by Dr. B. Seemann, Harrow, 1863, pp. 122 and 203.

² See above, p. 19.

The tradition of the Nestorians as to their descent from the Israelites is only a bazaar tale, just as that of the Afghans, both trying to find a pedigree for themselves. Neither have any reminiscences of customs or ritual performances of olden times, as is the case with the Falashas in Abyssinia, whom we believe to be descendants of some Jewish emigrants, most likely Egyptian. The second diary is by the late Joseph Levi Tchorni,¹ who travelled in the countries of the Caucasus. This traveller was in the same position as Benjamin II., and had to rely upon written communications. He mentions traditions from Derbend and the neighbourhood that Dagestan forms a part of the cities of the Medes, that the Jews are descendants from those who were carried away by the Assyrians, and that they never returned either in the time of Jeremiah or with the Babylonian captives. In hard times many of them emigrated to Bokhara and to China, and others fled to the rocky places in the neighbourhood. But what is a tradition worth which has no actual reminiscences to support it? The Jews in the Caucasus observe the Rabbanitic rite. When were they converted, and by whom?

Now, to come back to our original question, Where are the Ten Tribes? We can only answer, Nowhere. Neither in Africa, where they have still to be found in the Great Desert, nor in India, China, Persia, Kurdistan, the Caucasus, or Bokhara. We have said that a greater part of them remained in Palestine, partly mixing with the Samaritans and partly amalgamating with those who returned from the Captivity of Babylon. With them many came also from the cities of the Medes, and many, no doubt, adhered to the Jewish religion which was continued in Mesopotamia during the period of the Second Temple. As to the prophetic promise that they will be gathered together in the Messianic time, we follow Akiba, who said that they will never return. Why should we be more orthodox than the great R. Akiba?²

But some of our non-Jewish readers may ask the question, If you cannot find them elsewhere, why not adopt the theory which is backed with so much evidence, if we are to judge from the countless books and pamphlets on it, that the lost Tribes are to be found in the United Kingdom? This question we would gladly answer (and could do so with the greatest ease, showing that the theory is contrary to ethnology, history, philology, and above all common-sense), if we had time to wade through this vast literature, and if our readers were not already wearied by our own too extended essay. We do not

¹ ספר המסעות, St. Petersburg, 1884, p. 585.

² See above, p. 21.

promise, but the time may come, when we shall consider the question from the so-called Anglo-Hebrew side. At present, we can only say to those who are searching for the lost Tribes in any part of the United Kingdom—England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland, what we said some years ago to the late great champion of the theory that the Welsh are the lost Tribes. After expounding for more than half an hour his theory that the Cymri derive their name from Omri,¹ and abusing our great Celtic scholar Professor Rhys for taking another view on grounds of philology and ethnology, he asked our own opinion, which we gave him in the following words: "My belief is that you are more lost than the Ten Tribes."

A. NEUBAUER.

¹ See *Proofs for the Welsh that the British are the lost Tribes of Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant.* By Lazarus, Bangor, 1880, p. 8 sqq.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

We have omitted to give a reference concerning Eldad's diary to Dr. N. Brüll's instructive article, on Dr. Jellinek's *Bet Hamidrash*, vi., which appeared in the *Jahrbücher für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, edited by Dr. N. Brüll, iv. (1879), p. 124, seqq.—In a MS. recently acquired for the Bodleian Library (see *Mediæval Jewish Chronicles, Anecdota Oxoniensia*, 1887, p. xx.), Eldad's diary in a more concise form is ascribed to Elhanan, son of Joseph, a merchant.—The literature of the Sambatyon and the lost tribes has not remained a Jewish fiction; many Christian writers took a vivid interest in it. We shall only mention the article, *Wunderfluss Sambathyon und die rothen Juden* in Vulpus' *Curiositäten* iv., p. 527 to 735. Schudt *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, V., XV., p. 513, sqq. (ed. Frankfurt a.M. 1715), and the anonymous article with the title of *Zwo warhafftige neue Zeitung aus Venedig*, 1596, concerning the red Jews dwelling in the Caspis mountain. This piece is very rare, and we saw it in the Royal Library, Berlin.—By oversight, we referred in Part III. of this essay to Sammelband III. instead of IV.—Lastly, we have to express our best thanks to Dr. Steinschneider for his kind help concerning the bibliography of the literature on the lost Tribes.
